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THE BAPTIST Record

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No. 46

Spirit of missions alive and well at WCC

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

The spirit of missions is alive and well at the Baptist Student Union (BSU) of William Carey College's (WCC) main campus in Hattiesburg, according to Tim Glaze, BSU director.

Last fall the WCC BSU took 33 students on a mission trip to Galeana, Mexico, the first of several hands-on mission opportunities for students planned for the year.

Glaze feels this kind of exposure to missions is an important part of the ministry of the BSU.

"If a hook can be set to pull them toward a career mission choice, or to refocus this mission vision in the local church where students serve, then it is all worth it," Glaze said.

The WCC BSU made four mission trips last year — one to Argentina, two to Honduras, and one to San Francisco, Glaze said. In all, 47 different students took part in addition to the students who served as BSU summer missionaries, according to Glaze.

"Some worry that the emphasis on missions trips will hurt applications for summer missions," Glaze said. However, he has had a record 29 applications for BSU summer missions this year. "Many of these students' first exposures to mission work were on a short term mission trip," he said.

The Mexico trip was in conjunction with Bobby Shurden Ministries. Shurden is a Hattiesburg area pastor who has led several trips into

Mexico. Vans were provided by Calvary Church, Petal, and Temple Church, Hattiesburg.

In addition to the 33 students, Shurden, and Glaze, two nurses, Peggy Shurden and Kathy Woods, participated.

During the week, the students saw approximately 600 people in a health clinic, gave out \$3,135 worth of food and supplies, and distributed 75 bibles.

Students also performed puppet shows, held evangelistic services, and did relational evangelism. In all, over 50 people made professions of faith.

"It was a very humbling experience," said Ashley Fitzhugh, a sophomore business major from Pinegrove, La.

"We put out food and the people had to stand in line to receive it, some for a long, long time. No one got impatient," she said.

Fitzhugh's assignment on this trip was team photographer. "I was not involved in hands-on mission, but I captured others doing missions," she said.

"It made me realize how much we (Americans) take for granted."

"I learned what it means to really be a servant. As Bro. Bobby (Shurden) said, a true servant sees what needs to be done, and does it. That is what I want to be. That is one of my goals now, to be a true servant," Fitzhugh said.

For Sonya Poole it was a time of spiritual renewal. Poole is a senior from Brookhaven.

"Even though there was a



CONNECTING — William Carey College (WCC) student Charla Jeter of Pascagoula interacts with children in Galeana, Mexico, on a recent WCC Baptist Student Union Mission trip. (BR special photo by Ashley Fitzhugh)

barrier of language between us, there was a love that was there, that reached across that barrier," Poole said.

"A little orphan named Daniel really struck me. He was by far the one I will remember. He was very quiet and he didn't show much emotion.

"On the night we said good-bye he was crying. It broke my heart. It made me feel in ways I cannot describe.

"I will remember this experience for a long time. It was like

God was there, spiritually and emotionally. As a result of this (trip) I would consider God calling me into missions," she said.

According to Glaze, it is testimonies like these that make the mission trips worthwhile.

"Hopefully when these students graduate they will take some of this excitement of missions to their local churches," he said.

For additional photos, please turn to page five.

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

'God With Us' set

Prayers lift heavy weights

LC lawsuit to be settled?

Letters to the Editor

Belgian Baptists recognized

Baptists in Belgium are now officially recognized after having been classified as a "cult" for a number of years and thus outside the country's constitutional protections.

The recognition came in a Dec. 6 unanimous vote by the Protestant Synod in Brussels to accept the Union of Baptists in Belgium.

The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) had joined with European Baptists to plead the cause of Belgian Baptists to be officially recognized, since this prevented them from carrying out many church duties such as marriage.

There are 19 churches with approximately 850 members in the Baptist Union.

Denton Lotz, BWA general secretary, said the Belgian recognition is a sign of hope for Baptists in Austria who still are not officially recognized.

"It is good that we did not give up hope," Lotz said. "Now we need to encourage Austrian Baptists because they are in the same situation, at least not recognized by the state."

Looking back

10 years ago

West End Church, West Point, burns to the ground following a gas explosion. The building is completely destroyed in about one hour. The building was constructed in 1953 and was currently undergoing renovation. Jim Carr is pastor.

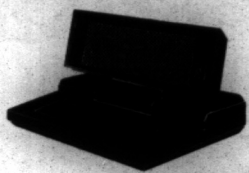
20 years ago

Young people of Broadmoor Church, Jackson, give away 10,720 Christmas cookies to hospital patients and residents of nursing homes. Volunteers, both youth and adults, respond to a challenge in the church bulletin for "the best cookies you can bake."

50 years ago

Longview Church, Oktibbeha Association, showers Pastor and Mrs. C. Snowden with gifts for the holiday season. Since Snowden was called to Longview four years ago, there have been 44 additions and the church joined the Every Family Plan of The Baptist Record.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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The best resolution of all

The year 1998 dawns brightly across Mississippi and the world. Locally, prosperity abounds. Nationally, the United States sits atop the world stage with nary a challenger in sight. Internationally, the world is relatively peaceful.

Our wallets are fat, the threat of war is virtually non-existent, and — with a few notable exceptions — a lot of folks around the globe seem to be getting along with each other. For the majority of us, the future couldn't look better.

So, how's your spiritual life?

It is too often the case that when Christians take inventory of their lives at the beginning of a new year, the spiritual aspect gets overlooked. The question that begs to be asked on this New Year's Day is, why?

For some, it's the smugness of false peity — the pharisaical self-assurance that nothing could be wrong since every effort has been made to go through the motions of religiosity. If we dress up in our finest clothes and go to church each Sunday and drop a lot of money in the offering plate, that about covers everything, doesn't it?

For others, it's simple shallowness of commitment as reflected in hit-and-miss Bible study, sporadic prayer life, and church attendance when there's nothing more enticing for the week-end. Your buddies want you to go skiing on Sunday morning when the lake isn't so crowded? No problem; surely somebody will be in Sunday School to cover your responsibilities.

For still others, it's a pronounced aversion to taking an honest look within one's heart and critically assessing one's relationship to God. This is arguably the largest category (certainly for newspaper editors, among others) because almost no one relishes standing in front of the mirror and admitting mistakes have been made.

Children don't like owning up to mistakes in the presence of their fathers, and most of us don't like owning up to our mistakes in the presence of our Heavenly Father. So, we dodge it whenever we can. That's really too bad.

The days following New Year's observances are a perfect time to cast aside whatever reasons we manage to fabricate for ourselves and take a long, hard look at where we are in our walk with God.

Anyone who has done so — truly taken spiritual inventory in every sense of the phrase — will tell you it isn't easy but is well worth the time and trouble, for God can accomplish his will through us only when we are in total submission to him.

Submission. There's that word again. Not the most popular ordering of letters in our vocabulary, is it? Our culture has redefined submission as a way of life to be avoided at all costs, dumped into the same trash heap as responsibility and accountability.

However, Christians know there is power in submission. James 4:7-10 (NIV) states, "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up."



For Christians, could there be a better road map to a proper relationship to God?

For Christians, could there be a better step-by-step method for a spiritually-successful new year?

Let's together make a New Year's resolution to work harder to be everything God wants us to be as Mississippi Baptists. It will be the best resolution of all.

He has already blessed us beyond measure and we have been faithful to his call, but we can do better.

Mississippi Baptists are the brightest light on the highest hill. Let's resolve to burn even brighter in 1998 and beyond.

A PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE:



Galloping toward creedalism

By Carl M. White, Associate Editor

With vast joy and occasional sleepy eyes, I have been reading portions of Jesse L. Boyd's "A Popular History of Baptists in Mississippi," published in 1930, and "A Complete History of Mississippi Baptists" by Z. T. Leavell and T. J. Bailey, published in 1904.

I came across a statement written by Zachariah Reeves, who for 23 years was a moderator in the Mississippi Association. Leavell and Bailey wrote of Reeves that he "... was unquestionably a man of great power ... Doctrinal in his preaching, and very earnest and emphatic in his delivery."

Reeves wrote a circular letter to be sent around to all the Baptist churches in Mississippi warning about the dangers of creedalism. He wrote:

"Turn and look among the different Christian denominations, and there are more creeds and abstracts than we are willing to number; some rending the denomination, affecting peace and union of the churches; while others from the authority of convention, appointing a committee to draft abstracts of faith, filled, more or less, with human productions, and circulated and imposed on the churches, as they often are, and that by those who profess to be ministers of the cross of Christ. The effect of these human creeds and man-made

abstracts called faith, have produced among us pain; we have seen churches divided, seeds of discord sown, tears of sorrow falling from their eyes, party spirit and confusion planted. Ministers of the gospel, who often met together in the same sanctuary, and proclaim the cross of Christ to a dying world, and could kneel together under the shadow of the mercy seat, and lift their cries to God, with and for one another, as the voice of one man, the tender cords of affection that united them are rent asunder, new sects and parties formed, and the world confused with their creeds."

Isn't it amazing how contemporary the past can be? Dead and gone to be with the Lord now some 120 years, Reeves sounds as though he has been to the Southern Baptist Convention in this last decade!

About the same time I was reading about Reeves, The

Baptist Record received a press release from the North American Mission Board (NAMB). It was a statement of guidelines for interdenominational cooperation. In the opening paragraph it states that NAMB, in pursuit of its God-ordained tasks, must also uphold "evangelical/biblical theology."

Right there Reeves would have had a problem. Isn't it enough that we uphold biblical theology? Why qualify it more with the word "evangelical?" NAMB isn't finished.

Not only must they uphold Biblical theology qualified by the word evangelical, they must also uphold theology as defined by the Baptist Faith and Message.

Most Baptists have no problem here. We are quite used to this non-binding statement of beliefs generally held by Baptists, but there's more!

The NAMB statement goes on to say that in addition to upholding an evangelical/biblical, Baptist Faith and Message theology, employees must also give adherence to Biblical inerrancy, "as articulated and explicated in the 1978 and 1982 Chicago Statements on Biblical Inerrancy and Hermeneutics."

Hold on to your hat — they're still not finished! In addition, the NAMB statement says they will keep in mind the "high statement of Scripture developed by the 1987 Peace Committee and the 1994 Report of the Theological Study Committee."

If you're keeping count, that's six different theological parameters to guide the men and women of NAMB.

If you listen, you can hear Reeves turning over in his grave. Would it be less than the truth to call this creeping creedalism? Well, maybe not. This thing isn't creeping, it's galloping!

Zachariah Reeves told Mississippi Baptists over 100 years ago that, "We must see to it very carefully, that it be really the Christian Faith we believe, profess, propagate, and contend for; not the creeds and doctrines, and man-made abstracts called faith; nothing of later date than the inspired writings of the holy evangelists and apostles." Amen!

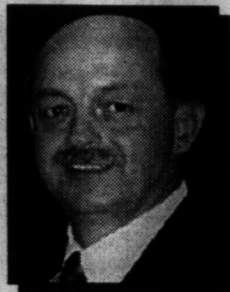
Clark tapped 'Small Church Pastor of the Year'

Earl Clark, pastor of the Pleasant Valley Church, Mendenhall, has been chosen as the 1997 Outstanding Small Church Pastor of the Year in Mississippi.

He was recognized at the second session of the Simpson Association annual meeting on October 21 at the Holly Grove Church, Braxton.

"His ministry has taken the Pleasant Valley congregation from being on the verge of collapse to becoming a growing, evangelistic, and mission minded body of believers," said Farris Smith, Simpson Association director of missions, who nominated Clark for the award.

Smith wrote in his nomination of Clark, "In every area, Pleasant Valley has become a vibrant, excited, growing people of God, with a desire to reach people and minister to the needs



Clark

of their community.

"All of this from a congregation who were about to close their doors a few years ago. The key ingredient to this change is the ministry of Rev. Earl Clark who has been an example of love, faithfulness, and a genuine real person through a very difficult time.

"When others might have left for another church field, Rev. Clark has remained with them. His love and care for them is equally demonstrated now in their love and respect for him."

Clark has served since 1988 as pastor of Pleasant Valley Church.

Ministry accomplishments during Clark's tenure include:

- organization of education and discipleship programs and missions education ministry.

- renovated worship area and plans for additional educational space.

- increases in Cooperative Program and associational giving.

- restoration of broken relationships.

— additions to the church family by baptism and letter.

Clark's ministry at Pleasant Valley Church began with less than 20 people in Sunday School.

On one Sunday in February of this year, 94 people were in attendance during a three-month stretch that averaged 85 people attending Sunday School.

Clark was bivocational until October 1, 1996.

The Outstanding Small Church Pastor of the Year program began in 1987 when the Southern Baptist Convention instructed the Church Administration Department of the Baptist Sunday School Board to implement a process of recognition of pastors of churches with under 300 members.

The process involves nominations from associational leaders to the state convention church administration and pastoral ministry departments.

State conventions use various methods of selection and recognition for this award.

Mississippi has been involved in this process each year through

the Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries (CAPM) Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), under leadership of department director Julius Thompson.

Clark received an engraved plaque from CAPM consultant Matt Buckles, in front of many members of Clark's church who were present to show their appreciation for Clark.

Clark will be nominated in the search for a denomination-wide small church pastor of the year.

For more information on the Outstanding Small Church Pastor of the Year program, contact Buckles at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.



THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

The Baptist
Record

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

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VOL. 121

No. 46

'God with us' set for Evangelism Conf.

By Tim Nicholas
MBCB Communication Director

Preparations are being finalized for the Mississippi Baptist production of the popular Christian musical "God with Us", scheduled for 7 p.m. on Jan. 19 in the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson.

The musical is part of the 1998 Mississippi Baptist Evangelism Conference, which begins at 1:30 p.m. on Jan. 19 and continues through the next day. All sessions will be at Alta Woods Church, Jackson, except for the "God With Us" presentation at the Coliseum.

Speakers for the Evangelism Conference include:

- Chuck Kelley, president of New Orleans Seminary, New Orleans.

- Luther Price, pastor of Riverside Church, Clarksdale.

- Jim Butler, pastor of Trinity Church, Southaven.

- Charles Carter, pastor of Shades Mountain Church, Birmingham.

"God With Us" is the most worshipful, spiritually heartwarming piece of music I have done in my 27 years as minister of music," said Franklin Denham of Highland Church, Meridian.

Denham is one of a number of Mississippi ministers of music who have led their choirs in the musical in their churches, and who are bringing those choirs to blend their voices into a 1,500-voice ensemble for a special performance for the public.

A total of 84 church choirs will comprise the mass choir — mainly from Mississippi but with groups from Alabama and Louisiana also participating.

The event is being billed as, "A gift of celebration to our Lord and for the people of Mississippi."

The musical was placed in the Coliseum not only because no other facility could hold such a choir, but also to encourage people to come who might not attend in a church building.

The performance is open to the public,

and there is no admission charge. Baptists are being asked to bring their unchurched friends.

The musical was written by Don Moen, Jack W. Hayford, Tom Hartley, Tom Fetke, and Camp Kirkland.

L. Graham Smith, director of the Church Music Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), will direct the choir.

The choir will be accompanied by a 150-piece volunteer orchestra. Bruce Zeigler, associate minister of music at Whitesburg Church, Huntsville, Ala., will be orchestra conductor.

Three Mississippi Baptists will give their Christian testimonies as a part of the program: Patsy Bozeman of Brandon; Steve Jordan of Clinton; and Teri Oyler of Columbus.

Karan Clark, wife of Mississippi Secretary of State Eric Clark gave her testimony during recent performances by her church choir at First Church, Brandon.

She spoke of becoming the mother of a daughter with Down's Syndrome and how distraught she and her husband had been, at first.

While telling the audience that, given the choice again, she would take her child in a second, "God shielded me from all the people crying," she said. "It was God speaking. I'm really a shy person."

"The song that sticks in my mind is 'Be Strong and Take Courage.'"

Tamy Jackson of Parkway Church, Natchez, said that in participating in community associational performances with other churches in the Natchez area, the program "brought a oneness within the area churches."

"I heard that over and over," she said.

For more information on participating in "God With Us," contact the MBCB Church Music Department at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

For more information on the 1998 Mississippi Baptist Evangelism Conference and other evangelism projects in Missis-

issippi, contact the MBCB Evangelism Department at the above address and telephone numbers.

S. A. "Sonny" Adkins is MBCB director of evangelism.



MONDAY, JANUARY 19, 1998

7 P.M.

MISSISSIPPI COLISEUM

Interstate 55 North at High Street

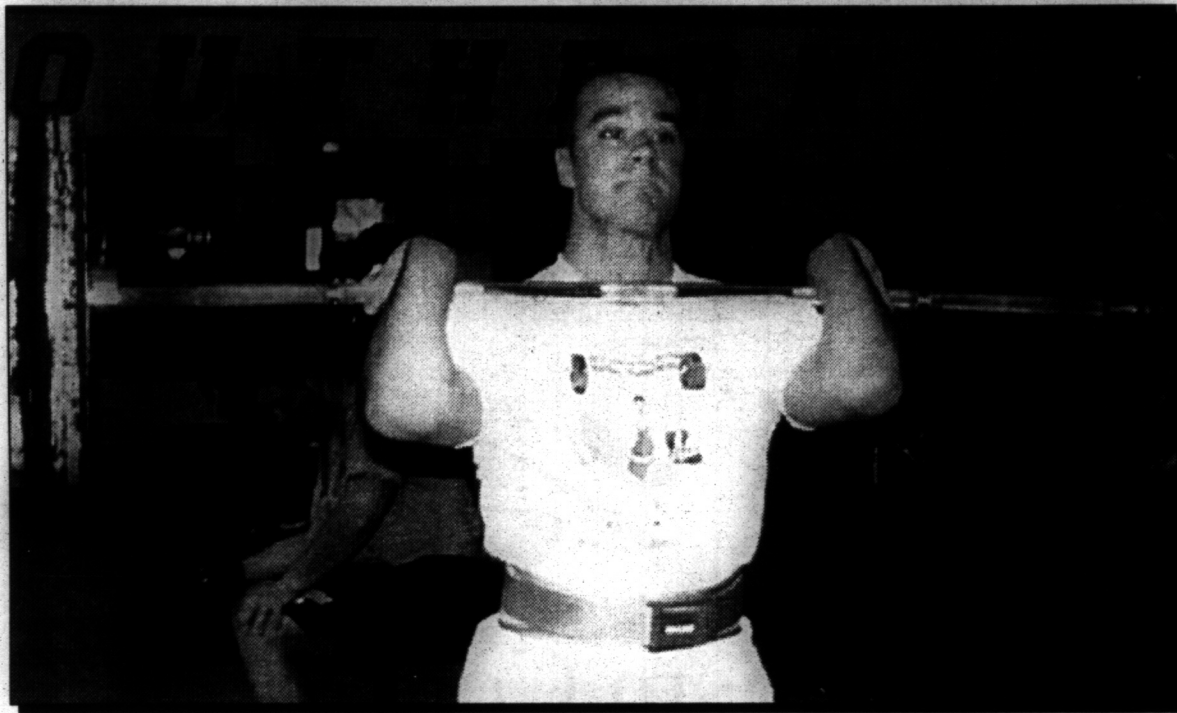
Jackson, Mississippi

A part of the 1997 Mississippi Baptist Evangelism Conference

Prayers help lift heavy weights for athlete

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

Ashley Austin, a 21-year-old junior at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, stood before the judges at the 1997 Collegiate National Weight Lifting Championship in Savannah, Ga.



Austin

Before him was a barbell with weights totaling over 400 pounds.

Filled with a confidence that was to him supernatural in origin, Austin bent down and lifted the weight to his shoulders. In a quick, jerk-like motion, he raised the weight above his head, spreading his legs in a

scissor-like fashion. Then he stood straight and tall, with nearly three times his body weight over his head until the judges gave him notice that he had successfully completed the clean and jerk lift.

This lift, plus a near 350-pound snatch lift, was enough to give Austin the gold medal in the 91 kilogram category. He was a national champion, finishing 16 pounds ahead of the silver medalist.

Austin believes his success that day was due to a combination of three things. "First of all, it is a gift from the Lord," he said. "I don't deserve any credit. I give it all to God."

"Second is the hard work and dedication," he said. "This hasn't always been easy. On many a workout I wanted to cry I was in so much pain."

"Third, I couldn't have done it without all the prayers."

Austin understands literally hundreds of people were praying for him that day, many of them people he had met that summer in the Pacific Northwest where he served on a revival team as a Baptist Student Union (BSU) summer missionary.

"I struggled with whether or not to go to summer missions," Austin recalled. His goals in weightlifting were leading toward the nationals in October 1997. Being on the mission field meant he would not be able to work out on a daily basis like he could if he stayed home.

After praying, Austin was convinced God wanted him to be a BSU summer missionary.

"The summer of the revival was remarkable," he said. "I would get to preach five or six times a week."

The team traveled to churches in Oregon, Washington state, and Idaho. They would lead in revival services Sunday through Thursday and go witnessing during the day.

When he was able to find the equipment, Austin would work out, but nothing like the rigorous pace he would have kept had he been home.

"When in training I will lift three hours a day, five days a week," he said. The rigors of the mission field did not allow this kind of training.

However, the experience on the mission field did allow something else — contact with hundreds of Christians who committed to pray for Austin when he went to the nationals on Oct 11-12.

Austin said he could feel those prayers. "I warmed up around 12 noon. Usually during warmups I'm nervous. This time I was relaxed, calm, loose, and flexible. I was ready to go after it."

"I was almost crying during the warm-ups. I was doing so well. I knew I was going to do good. I knew all these people were praying for me," he said.

There are two kinds of lifts in

weight lifting competition: the clean and jerk, and the snatch. Competitors have three tries with both types of lifts. The best weights from both lifts are combined for a total score.

Austin hit two out of three of his snatches, and all three of his clean and jerks.

"The guy behind me had to add about 30 pounds to his last lift to try and beat me," he said.

To Austin, weight lifting is more than just the thrill of competition.

"When I first got involved in weight lifting it was to be involved in weight lifting. When I accepted Christ at 17 I thought of ways to use weight lifting to share my faith," he recalled.

In his six years of competitive lifting, he has won eight gold medals and two silver medals, including back-to-back state championships for the John Curtis High School weight lifting team of River Ridge, La.

Austin's parents were divorced when he was very young. He went to church with his mom and sister, and was baptized at age five, but he had no idea what it was about.

"At about 10 or 11 we stopped going to church at all," Austin said.

Things began changing in Austin's life after he attended a youth function at Metairie Baptist Church.

"Two deacons from the church came to visit me and witnessed to me."

"It was an awesome experience. After that I went to church every time the doors were open."

"At 17 I realized that I had never really called upon the name of the Lord," Austin recalled.

"I knelt by the side of my bed and prayed out to God. On that day I became a new creature," he said.

Austin is frequently asked to speak before Fellowship of Christian Athletes groups, youth groups, and at other church gatherings.

"I want to share the gift God has given me," he said.

After attending graduate school or seminary, Austin wants to be a college or professional strength coach in addition to doing ministry.

"I feel called to the ministry, to preach," he said, "but not necessarily as a pastor. I would like to go out West, someplace out of the Bible belt where there are not so many Christians."

His ultimate goal is to make the Olympic team for the 2000 Olympiad in Sydney, Australia.

"If I can win the gold medal in Sydney, it will give me more opportunities to share my faith," he said.

"In 1 Cor. 9:24, Paul says that in a race all run but only one gets the prize. We need to run to win, to give it our all. We all need to do that."



Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

LifeAnswers

The recent death of my daughter after a long, painful illness has caused me to doubt my faith. God has been no comfort to me. How can I find my way back?

God has not left you, but your hurt is so great that you are focusing on it instead of God. Statistics show that at least 18-24 months are needed to cope with a difficult death before a grieving loved one can again see hope. Begin keeping a diary that will track your emotions and help you understand in written form what you are feeling inside. After a few weeks, you will be able to review the diary to see how far you have come, and that will help you plan where you want to go. Stay around close friends, but realize they may not always know what to say or do. Enjoy their willingness to help you, and overlook their mistakes. Locate a support group where you can share your story and observe others who are ahead of you in this process. Start an exercise program, which serves as an excellent outlet while you deal with your grief. Finally, keep God's Word close at hand, stay in church, and

pray. When your mind is less cluttered, you will be better able to hear God's still, small voice.

My first-grader is using bad words he hears in school. How can I nip this before it becomes a habit?

Your first-grader is learning to express himself, and somehow he has come to understand that using bad words will gain attention for him. Rather than overreacting or shaming your son, respond with, "Let's say that another way." You can encourage correct behavior by allowing him to see that he has a choice in using more appropriate words. Find out where your son is picking up this bad language. If it comes from television, for example, switch the channel and say, "We don't let that type of talk come into our home." The same is true if one of your son's friends is causing the problem — tell him, "We don't talk that way in our home." Your son will see that he can take a stand for what's right, and you will strike an early blow against the peer pressure he will inevitably feel as he gets older.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in times of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

William Carey College students in Mexico

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

The spirit of missions is alive and well at the Baptist Student Union (BSU) of William Carey College's (WCC) main campus in Hattiesburg, according to Tim Glaze, BSU director.

Last fall the WCC BSU took 33 students on a mission trip to Galeana, Mexico, the first of several hands-on mission opportunities for students planned for the year.

Glaze feels this kind of exposure to missions is an important part of the ministry of the BSU.

"If a hook can be set to pull them toward a career mission choice, or to refocus this mission vision in the local church

where students serve, then it is all worth it," Glaze said.

The WCC BSU made four mission trips last year — one to Argentina, two to Honduras, and one to San Francisco, Glaze said. In all, 47 different students took part in addition to the students who served as BSU summer missionaries, according to Glaze.

"Some worry that the emphasis on missions trips will hurt applications for summer missions," Glaze said.

However, he has had a record 29 applications for BSU summer missions this year. "Many of these students' first exposures to mission work were on a short term mission trip," he said.

The Mexico trip was in con-

junction with Bobby Shurden Ministries. Shurden is a Hattiesburg area pastor who has led several trips into Mexico. Vans were provided by Calvary Church, Petal, and Temple Church, Hattiesburg.

In addition to the 33 students, Shurden, and Glaze, two nurses, Peggy Shurden and Kathy Woods, participated.

During the week, the students saw approximately 600 people in a health clinic, gave out \$3,135 worth of food and supplies, and distributed 75 bibles.

Students also performed puppet shows, held evangelistic services, and did relational evangelism. In all, over 50 people made

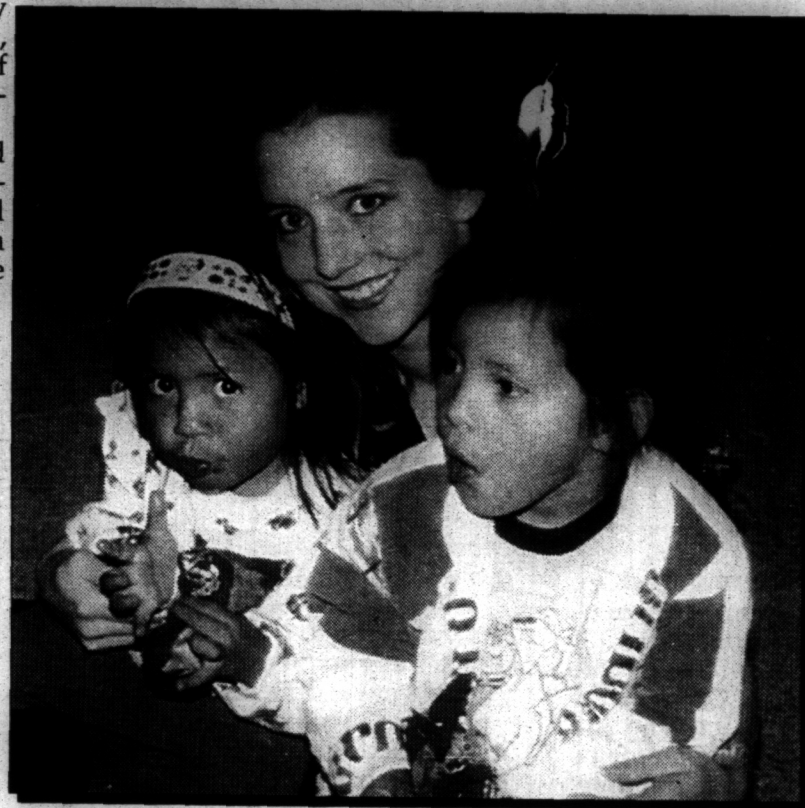
professions of faith.

"It made me realize how much we (Americans) take for granted," said WCC BSUer Ashley Fitzhugh of Pine Grove, La.

"Hopefully when these students graduate they will take some of this excitement of missions to their local churches," Glaze said.



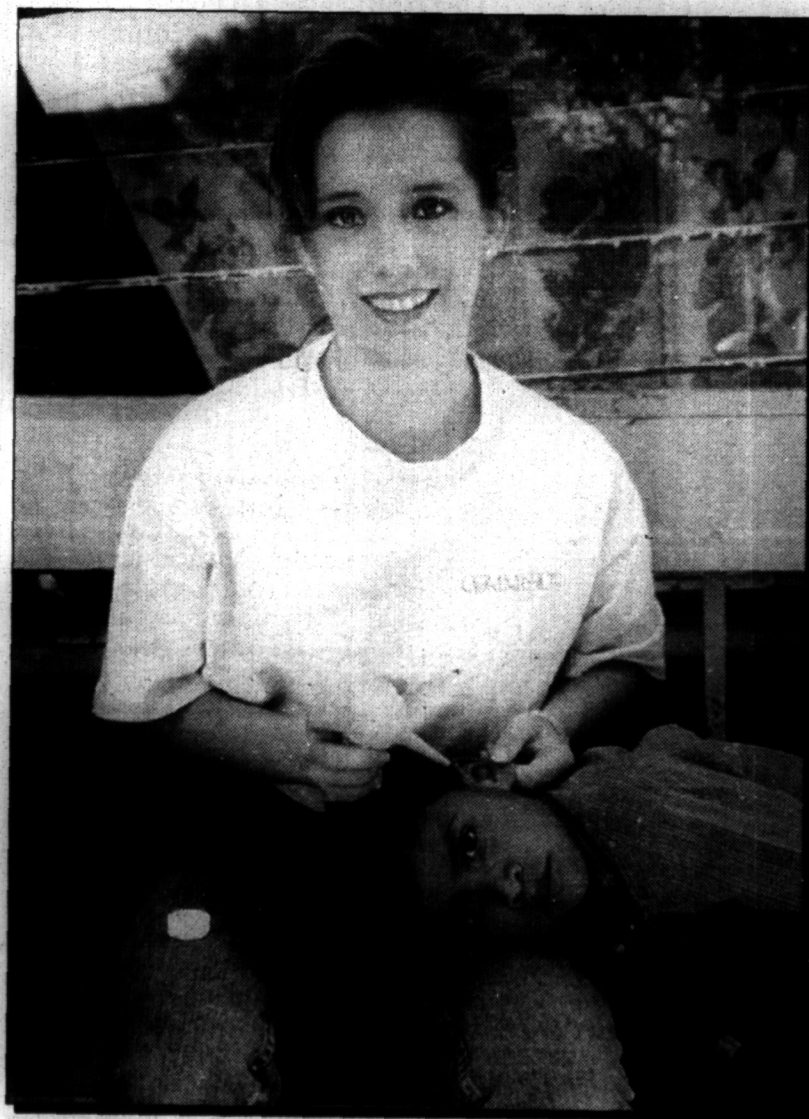
'SUFFER THE LITTLE ONES' — William Carey College (WCC) student Shawn Panni of Cleveland holds a Mexican infant in Galeana, Mexico, during the recent mission trip sponsored by the WCC Baptist Student Union (BSU).



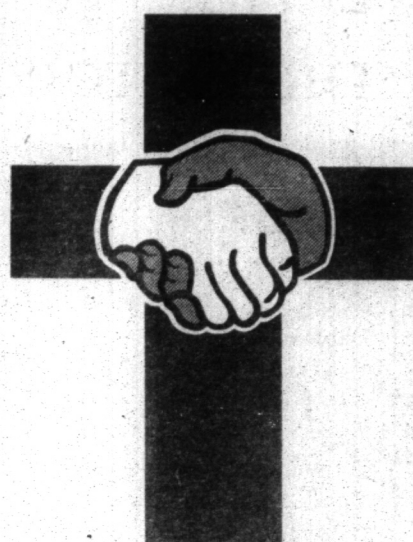
MANY FACES OF MINISTRY — Julie Magee, WCC senior nursing student from Foxworth, visits with children (above) who live in Galeana, Mexico, and cleanses the ears (below) of another child during the WCC BSU mission trip to Mexico.



MEDICAL MINISTRY — DeDe Fortenbury, WCC senior nursing student from Purvis, checks blood pressure for a resident of Galeana, Mexico, during the WCC BSU-sponsored mission trip to Mexico.



Photos by
Ashley Fitzhugh



Plumbing help needed

A plumber and helper are needed for about one week of work in Boulder, Col. under the auspices of the Mississippi/Colorado Partnership Project. The job will consist of maintenance work on an existing building, with a shower to be installed as well. Schedule is flexible but work is needed as soon as possible.

For more information, contact the Mississippi Baptist Partnership Missions Office at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 3998.

Louisiana College lawsuit may be settled

ALEXANDRIA, La. (BP and local reports) — A lawsuit filed last spring by four Louisiana College (LC) professors against members of Louisiana Baptists Speaking the Truth in Love conservative organization "can be settled," John Alley, chairman of the Louisiana Baptist Convention's executive board, said during the board's Nov. 11 meeting in Alexandria.

"We just need to get rid of some of the legal fees that have already been agreed upon," Alley, pastor of Calvary Church, Alexandria, told the board.

Then urging board members to contribute to the "LC Legal Fund," he said, "I don't like that name but we've got to call it something."

He told the board \$9,100 has been raised of the \$41,000 needed to pay the legal fees of the professors' attorneys. The settlement is contingent on the legal fees being paid by a third party.

"I'm going to do my part, not for any side, but for Louisiana Baptists and the cause of Christ and for our school," Alley said.

Alley said he understands if some are reluctant to give to the effort, but told board members, "if we want it done, we help."

Linus Carroll of Columbia, in nominating Alley for re-election as chairman, noted his leadership in the effort toward bringing peace to the state convention and in bringing executive board members closer to one another.

Last April, in an 8-0 vote, the Louisiana Supreme Court declined to review a lower court decision allowing a lawsuit to proceed.

The court ruling rejected a request for review of a ruling by Judge Tom Yeager of the Ninth Judicial District Court in Alexandria in September 1996 that the issues in the case do not fall under the First Amendment, which guarantees religious freedom and has been interpreted to exempt ecclesiastical matters from judicial review.

The professors' suit challenges what they claim are defamatory and derogatory statements meant to harm their professional and moral reputations. Their lawsuit is a legal statement of grievances that must be proven in court.

Yeager also had denied a motion by the defendants claiming that the professors' charges in the suit are too vague to allow for preparation of a defense and should be dismissed for that reason.

In January, a state court of appeals upheld Yeager on both rulings.

The lawsuit, filed in June 1996 and requesting a jury trial, alleges that letters distributed in 1995 by Leon Hyatt of Pineville and others in a state "conservative resurgency" group were defamatory and derogatory and meant to harm

the professional and moral reputations of several Louisiana College professors.

The lawsuit was filed by professors Carlton Winbery, Fred Downing, James Heath, and Connie Douglas.

The college itself is not involved in the lawsuit.

Events related in the suit date back to May 1995, when Hyatt and others organized a group for the purpose of calling the Louisiana Baptist

Convention "back to its biblical and moral roots."

Members of the group adopted four goals, two of which related directly to Louisiana College.

In the weeks after its organization, the group began distributing a packet of 21 letters citing concerns with the Baptist-affiliated college.

The letters cited a range of incidents at the school and named several professors.

Longtime Mississippi Baptist educator Rory Lee was recently selected as the new LC president.

Lee, a former top administrator at Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College in Clinton and former president of Baptist-affiliated William Carey College in Hattiesburg, has been described by Louisiana Baptist leaders as a unifying force in bringing the state's Baptists together over the Louisiana College dispute.

Staying Well

Dealing With Holiday Grief

The holidays are often hard on those grieving the recent death of a loved one. The loss of a spouse, child or parent is especially poignant during the holidays. With the rush of family-oriented activities emphasizing togetherness, people experiencing loss often are left feeling alone and isolated.

"When you've lost someone close, you might have also lost a confidant, a supporter, a friend," says Paul Stephenson, Director of Pastoral Care at Baptist Medical Center. "We rely on these people to be part of our lives, and we might end up feeling inadequate and lonely if they're not there for us."

But there are ways to ease the burden placed on those dealing with grief. In CareNotes, a counseling publication, author and grief counselor Darcie Sims writes that the loss doesn't have to mean the end of the holiday spirit. She suggests several ways to cope with loss during the festive season. "The holidays can become a time of peace and reflection, a time to cherish the gift your loved one has been — and continues to be — in the life of your family," Sims notes.

Here are a few of her suggestions for dealing with the difficult times:

Be patient and realistic. "Remember you are grieving," she says. "Be kind and gentle with yourself, and realistic about what you expect. Leave the word ought out of the holiday season this year."

Listen to your heart and acknowledge your limits. Spend time in reflection, and learn what you can reasonably expect from yourself.

Adapt cherished traditions. Don't throw your traditions away; instead, change them. Often, you can create new ones that help keep the memory of your loved one alive through the years.

Allow the tears to come, but look for joy amidst the pain. Tears have healing power; don't deny them to yourself. Sims recommends listing all the things and memories your loved one gave you, cutting them out and making decorations with them.

Focus on the spiritual dimension of the holidays. "In this season of light, remember the light your loved one has brought to your life," Sims suggests.

From all of us at Mississippi Baptist Health Systems, we wish you a joyous Christmas and a healthy New Year!

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PARTNERSHIP NEEDS

Editor:

For the past two years, Mississippi Baptists have had a partnership with Venezuelan Baptists.

There have been many opportunities for us as Mississippians to work alongside our Venezuelan brothers and sisters in Christ.

Some of the requests that have been sent to us are:

1. requests for construction teams.
2. assistance in Bible school.
3. assistance with Women's Missionary Union.
4. many requests for medical teams.

During the past two years, I have been blessed to be a part of medical mission teams to this country.

Last year, we went to the Falcon state and assisted the church there while we held medical clinics.

I cannot express what wonderful blessings I have received from going with these medical teams.

We have seen God work in wonderful, miraculous ways. We have seen revival and I have personally experienced it in my own heart.

Thirty-two churches have been started as a result of these medical teams.

Thousands have been saved and many like myself have had a renewal of commitment as a result of these trips.

Another medical trip is scheduled for March 13-23. A request has been made for 15 teams to fan out across the northern part of Venezuela and minister and proclaim God's word.

Many people are needed to honor this request. I hope Mississippi Baptists will hear this

cry as our call to missions.

For further information, please contact the Mississippi Baptist Partnership Missions Office at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, Ms 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800, ext. 3998, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

June Nolan
Mantee

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Editor:

Your editorial comments of Dec. 4 were excellent. ("Surfing the 'Net in Sickening Color," page two)

I wish you'd go a step further and start a drive for either outright censorship of the pornography so prevalent today, or for a re-interpretation of the "freedom of speech" amendment to make pornography a crime.

The article in the same issue about Vice President Gore, with his statement, "I do not believe God would have created them (homosexuals) as he has and intend for them to be mistreated," points up what this "freedom of speech" has done. Contrary to what Mr. Gore says, God does not "create" homosexuality, just as He does not "create" Downs Syndrome, or blindness, or missing limbs, or other malfunctions that infants are sometimes born with.

God created life with intelligence, and loves us all from birth. We, as humans, have the choice to accept and worship him.

How great it would be for children to go back to the wonderful days when I was growing up in the 30s and 40s.

If you wanted to know you could find out anything, but if you didn't want to know you could avoid it - save it for later when you were grown up.

It does rile me to notice all the fuss and ranting about teenagers smoking and nothing being done about this.

Youngsters can start smoking today and maybe have a problem in 30 or 40 years, but they can ruin their lives in one day because of sexual indiscretions.

Mary M. Jones
Yazoo City

TEST EVERYTHING

Editor:

In May 1997, in response to a call from a well-known "evangelical liberal" for Southern Baptists to embrace Pentecostalism, I exhorted us as a denomination to "wake up" to the assault that was seeking to destroy our doctrinal heritage and theological identity.

After seeing an article of Nov. 20 and two editorial letters of Dec. 4 which basically denounce their inaccurate views of Calvinism and its past and present role in Baptist and Southern Baptist history and doctrine, it is clear that the situation is far worse than I realized.

Perhaps because we have virtually abandoned doctrinal education and preaching as Southern Baptists, we seem perilously close to a practical if not yet official abandonment of our once-clear, Biblically-objective, Reformation theology and doctrine.

Our Southern Baptist forefathers made no equivocation or apology about the doctrinal and theological foundation that they laid and entrusted to us. Baptist giants like Williams, Spurgeon, Boyce, and Gambrell (one-time editor of The Baptist Record) did not cringe at the mention of Calvinism and its Biblical doctrine or doctrines of grace and election.

Officially at least, the 1963 statement of the Baptist Faith and Message remains true to our historic Biblical view of salvation, faith, and grace - although that seems to be a logical prospective victim.

Once again I plead and prayerfully challenge our denomination to "Test everything. Hold on to the good," (1 Thes. 5:21) and "Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you..." (2 Tim. 1:14 NIV)

Joseph J. Marshall
Oxford

WHY DO WE BIND HIM?

Editor:

Why do we bind up the most powerful one who has ever walked the face of the earth - the one who never asked us to celebrate his birthday, and didn't leave a clue when it was.

He did ask us to remember his death until he comes. (There is life for us in his sacrificial death.) We have made a choice to give him a birthday and celebrate. Why? Why do we have to bind up this powerful one in the baby wrappings of his day and keep him in this helpless state all during the Christmas season?

What the world needs is not a helpless Baby Jesus, but the world needs the ministering Jesus who heals the brokenhearted, gives sight to the blind, teaches the truth, sets the captives free, and brings salvation to all who call upon him.

These weird fantasy Christmases, that many have a hard time surviving, have a little Jesus and a big Santa.

Loosing Jesus to be who he is at this season would be the greatest gift for all of us.

Joyce Linton
Columbus

Denson to perform free

Popular Christian vocalist and Mississippi native Al Denson has announced that he will conduct high school assemblies and evening evangelistic outreach concerts across the country during Spring 1998 - free of charge.

"Al Denson is available to do 120 school assemblies, and follow these up with an evangelistic evening concert to reach students for Christ and successfully partner with local churches to plug students into the church and the Word of God.

"Al Denson/Celebration ministries will pay all costs (including) travel, hotel, crew, sound, lights - all costs," according to the musician's management agency.

Denson, who was born in Starkville, will conduct three high school assemblies in each city during the day and follow those up with an evening evangelistic outreach concert. There

will be no ticket sales, love, offerings, or donations.

For more information, send a fax request to Naomi Duncan of Ambassador Agency in Nashville at (615) 661-4344, or e-mail to her attention at: Tim@AmbassadorAgency.com.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.



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Carl E. Talbert, retired pastor, dies Dec. 13

Carl E. Talbert, 91, former pastor of First Church, Pearl, died of heart failure Dec. 13 at his residence in Pearl. A native of Bailey, Lauderdale County, Talbert had been a resident of Pearl since 1957. He was a former resident of Bessemer, Ala. Talbert served as pastor of First Church, Pearl, from 1957 until his retirement in 1973.

Talbert entered Mississippi College in 1932, graduating cum laude in 1936. While in college, he pastored Liverpool Church, Yazoo City, and Hernando Church. He entered Southern Seminary in 1936 and completed his master's degree in 1939. Before going to Pearl, Talbert pastored churches in Virginia,

West Virginia, Alabama, and Marion, Miss.

Funeral services were conducted Dec. 16 at First Church, Pearl, followed by interment at the Rose Hill-Magnolia Cemetery, Meridian.

Survivors include his son, Charles H. Talbert of Waco, Texas; one brother, R. L. Talbert of Meridian; two sisters, Rosalind Coker of Memphis, Tenn., and Doris Abernethy of Nashville, Tenn.; two grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Memorials may be made to the Carl E. Talbert Scholarship Fund, c/o Mississippi College, P.O. Box 500, Clinton, MS 39056.

Revival Results

Hope, West Point: Nov. 7-12; eight professions of faith; Donnie Guy, Gulfport, evangelist; Kris Hollis, music; Avery Jones, pastor.

Staff Changes

Joe T. Lusby has been called to First Church, Greenfield, Tenn., as pastor effective Jan. 1. His previous place of service was First Church, Tunica. Lusby is a graduate of the University of Mississippi and Southwestern Seminary.

JUST FOR THE RECORD

Lamar Baptist Seminary Extension Department is offering the following classes in the spring semester: Systematic Theology, taught by Charles Ray, will meet on Tuesday nights beginning Jan. 6. The tuition for this course is \$52. The Bivocational Pastor, taught by Douglas Benedict, will meet on Thursday nights beginning Jan. 8. The tuition for this course is \$54. Tuition includes the registration fee and textbooks. Both classes

will meet at 7 p.m. Registration will take place on Jan. 5 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Registration and class meetings will be at Lamar Baptist Building located on Highway 589 one mile south of Highway 98 west of Hattiesburg. For more information, contact Glenn Davis at (601) 948-4738 or 758-4589.

First Church, Fannin, had its March for Missions for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering on Dec. 7. The church exceeded its goal of \$5,000, making it the largest gift ever. Leroy J. Brewer Jr. is pastor.



Homecoming Day was held Oct. 26 at **First Church, Petal**. Annette Hethcox and Hilda Wade worked for more than three years on a fifty-year church history book. Faith Sunday School class donated a copy of the book to the church library to commemorate the church's first 50 years. The teacher of the class, Dorothy Hightower (right) presented the book to Deborah Sanders (left) church librarian. Paul Strahan is pastor.

Pleasant Grove Church, Lincoln Association, recently held a soup and singing and raised \$910 toward the suit project of the Brotherhood Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. This money will purchase suits for pastors in Home Mission work. Boots Hawkins is director of Brotherhood for Pleasant Grove Church.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

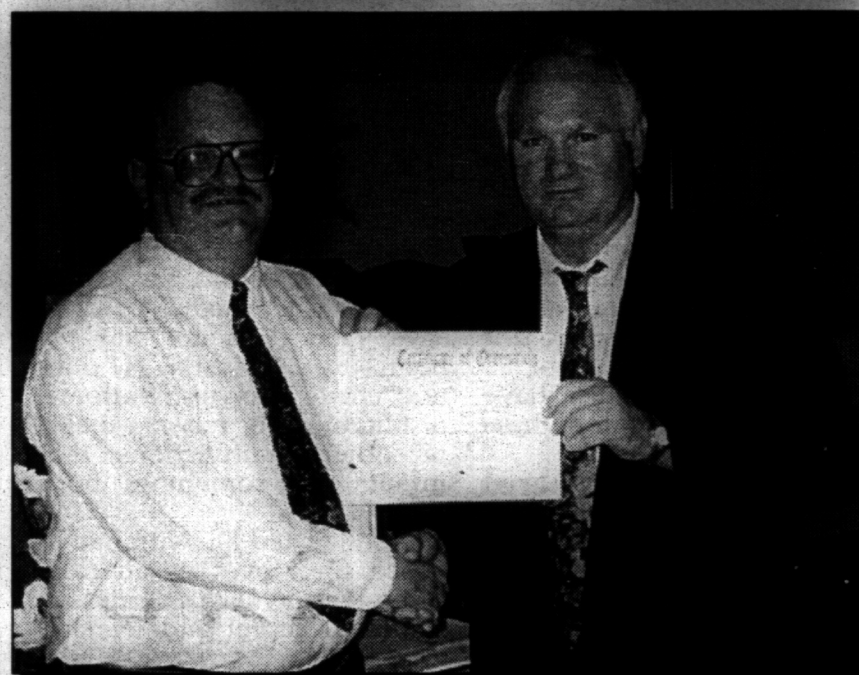
The Office of Continuing Education at **Mississippi College** is offering several classes scheduled to begin in January including: "Successful Money Management" will meet each Tuesday, Jan. 27-Feb. 10 from 6-9 p.m. in the Learning Resource Center. The cost of \$55 per person (in advance) or \$75 at the door. A Senior Adult Education Program is offered to adults ages 50 years or older to attend selected courses. These courses are based on space availability and are designed for retirees who are not seeking academic credit. The fee is \$50 per course. Creative Memories "Organizing and Preserving Your Photos" will meet Thursday, Jan. 22-Feb. 12 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. The cost is \$75. For registration procedures or information on Test Review offerings to begin in

January and ACT Test scheduled for Feb. 7, call the Office of Continuing Education at (601) 925-3265.

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NAMES IN THE NEWS

John Thomas of Lake, (left) was recently licensed to the ministry by Hopewell Church, Lake. Thomas is available for pulpit supply and may be contacted at (601) 536-3722 or (601) 469-1304 (work). Mark McDonald, pastor, is pictured at right.



Bigbee Church, Amory, recently ordained Ray Carroll to the gospel ministry. Carroll is available for pulpit supply. His address is 808 Walnut St., Amory MS 38821 or call (601) 256-4348. Pictured with Carroll (left) is Tommy Whaley, pastor.



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CACTUS SHADOWS BAPTIST CHURCH in Cave Creek, Arizona is now accepting resumes for full-time Pastor. Send to Cactus Shadows Baptist Church, Attn: Search Committee "CONFIDENTIAL", PO Box 504, Cave Creek, AZ 85331 phone (602) 488-1975.

RESUMES ARE BEING ACCEPTED by Green Valley Baptist Church of Henderson, Nevada for a Senior Pastor and a Minister of Music by Jan. 15, 1998. Send resumes to Mike Farnham, Chairman of Senior Pastor Search Committee or Larry Reynolds, Chairman of Music Pastor Search Committee, 270 N. Valle Verde Dr. Henderson, NV 89014.

PART TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC: Woodland Baptist church ATTN: Loren Meeder 3033 Ridge Road, Columbus, MS 39701. Tel: (601) 327-6689

PART TIME OR BIVOCATIONAL Youth Minister wanted: First Baptist Church, Crystal Springs, Mississippi. Send resume to Personnel Committee, First Baptist Church, Crystal Springs, MS 39059 Phone (601) 892-1149.

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Student conversions showing sharp rise

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A 34% increase in student conversions highlighted the 1997 Southern Baptist Student Ministry Report shared Dec. 2 with state student directors gathered in Nashville, Tenn., for their annual planning meetings at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

According to the annual statistics compiled by the board's national student ministry (NSM) office, 7,368 student conversions were reported in 1997, up 1,833 from the 1996 total of 5,535. Another large increase was reported in the number of college students involved in missions, up from 27,056 in 1996 to 30,152 this year.

"Using anybody's math, these are significant increases," NSM director Bill Henry said. "I'm excited about what's happening on campus."

Increases also were reported in the number of students

reached by Southern Baptist student ministry programs, up from 237,731 in '96 to 247,861 in '97, and the number of students involved in these ministries on an ongoing basis: 105,232 this year, up from 103,099 in '96.

Categories showing increases between 1996 and 1997 were:

- ◆ total contributions to student missions, \$3.43 million, up from \$3.29 million;

- ◆ campuses with student ministry programs, 1,056, up from 995;

- ◆ students involved in Bible study groups, 41,542, up from 34,905;

- ◆ number of evangelistic programs, 2,530, up from 2,154;

- ◆ established churches, Sunday Schools, or missions that students help strengthen, 5,922, up from 5,438.

- ◆ internationals involved in student ministry, 10,287, up from 9,386.

Among categories showing

decreases between 1996 and 1997 were:

- ◆ African Americans involved in student ministry, 9,038, down from 9,261;

- ◆ ethnics involved in student ministry, 4,914, down from 5,015;

- ◆ gifts to hunger relief, \$60,939, down from \$79,549.



BLIND DATE — A blindfolded Laura Pasiewicz prepares to kiss a pig as part of a fundraising contest for missions at the Baptist Student Union at Mississippi State University (MSU) in Starkville. The men and women competed against each other to raise money for missions, with the losers agreeing to kiss a pig brought in by MSU's veterinary school. Across the country, contributions to missions by Southern Baptist student ministry programs totaled \$3.43 million in 1997, up approximately \$140,000 from the previous year. (BP Photo by Jim Veneman)

B E E S O N D I V I N I T Y S C H O O L

No message is more important. relationship is everything.

RECENTLY, ONE OF OUR STUDENTS, JOHN-PAUL LOTZ, was struck and pinned in his car while entering the freeway. Several surgeries and many days in the hospital followed. Knowing that he was hundreds of miles from home, the Beeson Divinity School family responded with an outpouring of love and support. Reflecting on this, John-Paul, who was born in Switzerland and studied in Germany, summed up his experience in three German words, "*Beziehung macht alles*," "relationship is everything."

I CAN THINK OF NO MESSAGE MORE IMPORTANT for theological education today—"relationship is everything." The mission of Beeson is to prepare persons whom God has called to be ministers of the Gospel for service in the Church of Jesus Christ. This requires a serious engagement with the primary documents of the Christian faith, a deep understanding of our historical and theological foundations, as well as the ability to read the culture and boldly proclaim God's Word. But books, classrooms, and computers do not by themselves a theo-

logical community make! This requires regular worship of the Triune God and cultivation of spiritual disciplines for faculty, students, and staff alike.

NO ONE CAN BE A MINISTER

of the Gospel alone. All too often the culture of theological education reinforces patterns of isolation and competition. Our job is to nurture relationships so that every student may grow toward full maturity in Christ. Focus on relationality does not mean capitulating to the therapeutic culture with its "touchy-feely" techniques. It does mean taking time to listen, pray together, read God's Word, and celebrate His presence in worship. When this happens,

the chapel will become as important as the library, the prayer closet as prized as the computer lab.



Timothy George

Dean



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Oxford kids' rewards are in helping others

OXFORD, Miss. (BP) — For two summers, TeamKID members at First Church, Oxford, had collected rewards from the TeamKID store by earning points for such efforts as attendance, learning Bible verses and bringing visitors.

In the third year of the program, coach June Overstreet decided to ask the children if they would agree to converting the points they earned into dollars to help others less fortunate than they, instead of gifts for themselves.

The money would be used to buy needed items for the Taylor Christian Community Center, a joint mission project of First Church, Oxford, and four African-American churches in the area.

The children overwhelmingly agreed. (Even though their parents weren't so sure they would.)

Working as hard as if they were earning gifts for themselves, the 40-60 TeamKID members were able to raise \$600 for the community center.

Meanwhile, the TeamKID club at First Church, Morgan Hill, Calif., known for its outreach programs and missions projects, has gone caroling at six different convalescent homes in the area the past five years, mixing their TeamKID music with Christmas songs.

Last year, the children raised enough money to wear matching Christian Christmas sweatshirts (which they have worn throughout the year).

Club membership at the Morgan Hill church runs about 125 to 150 with an average weekly attendance of 75.

Reprinted from *Sidelines*, a quarterly newsletter for TeamKID coaches.

LIFE AND WORK

Human Life

Gen. 1:26-27, Psalm 8:3-8, Matt. 12:9-13

By Don Lum

A man is killed after arguing over five dollars. A teenager goes into a school and opens fire. A father kills his children because he doesn't want his ex-wife to have them. Over 30 million babies have been aborted in the last twenty-five years.

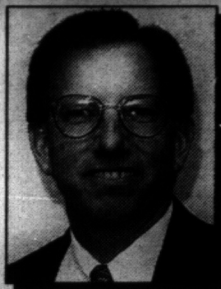
Are people very important? Is human life very valuable? This week as we examine God's Word, look inside yourself. Many have seen so much murder and death on movies and television that they have become callous toward it. Maybe that is one of the reasons we don't share like we should. Let God touch your heart this week and

see how much he values human life.

God Made You In His Image (Genesis 1:26-27). On the sixth day of creation God said, "Let us make man in our image" and he made Adam and he said it was very good. In God's likeness Adam was made. He had fellowship with God and walked with God in the garden.

Then Adam sinned. He chose to disobey God. Genesis 5:3 says that Adam begat a son in his own likeness; fallen, not in perfect fellowship with God.

The New Testament teaches that God sent Jesus at Christmas to restore the image of God in us, to make us a new



Lum

creations, if we choose to give up self and accept him. Now, once again we can walk with God and reflect his image.

God's highest creation is man! However, fallen man doesn't see it that way. He is selfish and dark, like Satan. That's where you and I come in. God wants to use us, his children, as lights in a dark world.

God Cares For You (Psalm 8:3-4). Think about it. The majestic God of creation who made the heavens and the earth and all that are in them, cares about YOU. He loves you and longs to have fellowship with you. Each time I think of the cradle and the cross I am again reminded of God's love for me.

God even knew you before you were born. Read Psalm 139 in its entirety, focusing on verses 13-16. God the Father knows you, he cares about you, and he

has a plan for your life.

God Entrusts His Creation To You (Psalm 8:5-8). What a privilege God has given us! First, he created mankind. Then he put him in charge of everything that he created — all the animals, all the land, all the waters, and everything in them. With privilege comes responsibility. You and I, under God's direction, are responsible for overseeing all that God created. It is a responsibility that we must take seriously.

Jesus tells a story, beginning in Matthew 25:14, about a man who gave talents to three of his servants. As you read the story notice with which servants the man was pleased.

Our goal as children of God should always be to please and honor him in all we do so that on that great day of reckoning he will be able to say to you, "Well done good and faithful servant."

God Sees You As A Person of Worth (Matthew 12:9-13). You

are special. God created you to be you, a unique individual with gifts and opportunities for service to his Kingdom that only you can fulfill.

From Jesus' own mouth, how much more valuable is a man than a sheep. He showed this truth by healing on the Sabbath, breaking the rules of the Pharisees.

People are important. Jesus showed it over and over during his years of ministry. Our task is to see ourselves and others through God's eyes — eyes of love, compassion, and forgiveness; eyes of hope, purpose, and fulfillment. It's only then that we can truly be the creation that God our Father intended us to be.

Conclusion. Don't let the world system harden your heart! Spend so much time with God that you see as he sees. Care about people. Serve as he did.

Lum is a consultant in the Miss. Baptist Evangelism Dept.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Seeking reconciliation

Genesis 33:1-12

By Edna Martin Ellison

"Blood is thicker than water," my grandmother used to say. Our family had strong traditions, and we often said, "I love you." Watching us, a woman in my Sunday School class said, "I envy you because of your family. You seem to love each other. My family doesn't have that tradition. I always dread Christmas because I have to spend a few days with my family. They bring up all the old hurts and all of us are miserable!"

How about you? Did Christmas this year invoke bad memories of broken family relationships? If so, you are not alone in your feelings. Many people experience discomfort when

family members are united.

Old Testament families experienced similar family tensions.

A Cautious Approach (Gen. 33:1-3). Because of his earlier deceit and his brother Esau's angry reaction, Jacob feared a reunion. He wanted to become reconciled, but he knew Esau held a grudge against him. He thought Esau might try to kill him, his men, his wives, or his children. Reconciliation always involves risk.

In last Sunday's lesson we studied about Jacob's encounter with God (Gen. 32:24-28). From that night on, his attitude was changed. Before that encounter Jacob had exhibited fear and self preservation. However,



Ellison

since that night's encounter with God, he had acted more courageously. When he saw Esau and his men (v. 2), he lined up his family (v. 2), but instead of remaining behind them to protect himself, he went ahead of them to face Esau (v. 3).

Furthermore, he exhibited a humility he'd never shown before when he bowed down before Esau seven times! Jacob was a changed man.

An Emotional Reunion. Genesis 33:4 is one of my favorite verses in the Bible. Imagine Jacob's relief when Esau ran to him, hugged him, and kissed him! This verse reminds me of the reunion of the Prodigal Son and his father (Luke 15:20). We need to remember that estranged members of our families may be as eager to reconcile as we are, but they wait for us to approach them.

Moving toward Mutual

Understanding. After the initial reconciliation came dialogue to help Jacob and Esau process what had happened. Reality set in. Esau asked Jacob about his family. Even as Jacob introduced them (vv. 6-7), he remained humble. He acknowledged God's goodness to him and called himself Esau's servant (v. 5).

As they talked, Esau asked about the gifts Jacob had sent ahead (v. 6). At first Esau refused the gifts (v. 9), but then, to please Jacob, perhaps as a sign of acceptance and reconciliation, he accepted them (v. 11). Verse 10 identifies a key to their reconciliation: Jacob saw "the face of God" in Esau's face. True reconciliation comes when we see others in light of the way we see God. Before she died, Mother Teresa of India said she saw the face of Jesus in the face of every poor starving person she helped. When we bring Jesus into our relationships, we see others in a different light.

Once Jacob and Esau had reconciled, each was free to go his own way without fear (vv. 13-20). They did not need to be together physically to be united in spirit.

Questions to Consider:

1. Are you resistant to the idea of reconciling with a family member? Make an honest self-examination of your feelings and respond as God leads you.

2. Like Jacob, do you feel the anxiety that may accompany a decision to seek reconciliation? Trust God to calm fears. Remember, the person with whom you seek reconciliation may be as eager as you are for a restored relationship.

3. How can you take that first reconciling step? Everyone needs to be reconciled in some way, to someone. Reconciliation includes developing mutual understanding of one another's words and actions. It won't happen overnight. Make a small beginning today.

Ellison is a consultant in the Miss. Woman's Missionary Union.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

Living with Hope

I Peter 1:3-12

By Debbie Sills

The beginning of a new year often marks the beginning of new ideas and fresh starts. Our lesson today deals with the hope we have in our future all year long with God at our side.

Hope for the Future (1:3-5). Peter was writing to Christians who were constantly being reviled and abused for their lifestyles to encourage them to endure and stand firm in their faith against the growing hostility. We find three gifts from God listed in verses 3-5 given to intensify our hope and faith in our Lord. We could never earn these and we certainly do not deserve them, but God in his

goodness has bestowed these precious gifts on us because of his love for us.

The first gift is the new birth we have. Through the death and resurrection of Christ we are born again and have a living hope since Christ is living in us. He provides all the hope we need in times of despair and anguish when he lives in our heart.

The second gift is our inheritance. We are his namesake and as such have all the privileges of his child. It is an inheritance that cannot be pushed away or destroyed. The full inheritance of God is ours forever.

The third gift we have from



God is eternal security. We are protected by the power of God through our faith. The person who has faith, even though he cannot physically see God, does not doubt God's watchful eye over his life. It is important to remember that God does not always remove us from troubles and sorrows of this world. He does, however, enable us to push through our troubles and continue. When one recognizes God as the ultimate controller of his life no matter what, life ceases to be a defeat and becomes a victory.

Hope in Difficulties (1:6-9). Rejoicing and being happy when there is disaster all around is a tremendously difficult task. Do you often feel overwhelmed with the circumstances in your life? Peter instructed his readers to rejoice and give praise to God for trials and difficulties because

that was what made them stronger. We can equate the testing of our faith to the purification process of gold, or to the training of athletes. Gold is strength tested by being placed in fire and melted down. This process is what makes the metal strong. In like fashion, athletes train strenuously, often dealing with sore muscles and fatigue, so that on race day they will be able to endure until the end. When we face trials in our life, God is actually trying to make us stronger.

Hope for You (1:10-12). These verses contain a very rich passage about the wonder of salvation for which the prophets of the Old Testament searched. They foresaw the suffering of the man who would come to fulfill the dreams of a Savior. Their vision of deliverance was one they never experienced, but looked forward to with anticipation.

Salvation is a tremendous thing. It was longed for by those

who never lived to know of Jesus' birth, it is reserved for humans alone, and is a free gift to those who will receive it.

Our response to his salvation and the gifts available to us should be to accept him through faith, place our hand in his hand and let him direct our life, and give our life to him completely. When we do this we know without hesitation that we are taken care of despite our circumstances. We must remember as we strive to live our life on faith that the surest way to face doubts and tribulations when they come is to have an extensive past history of answered prayer. The more a Christian prays with faith, the more he sees God answer prayer. The more you see God answer prayer, the stronger your faith will become while the desperation of difficult times becomes less.

Sills is advertising coordinator for The Baptist Record.

THE VILLAGE VIEW

The Baptist Children's Village



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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

NOV. 1, 1997-
NOV. 30, 1997

MEMORIALS

NOV. 1, 1997-NOV. 30, 1997

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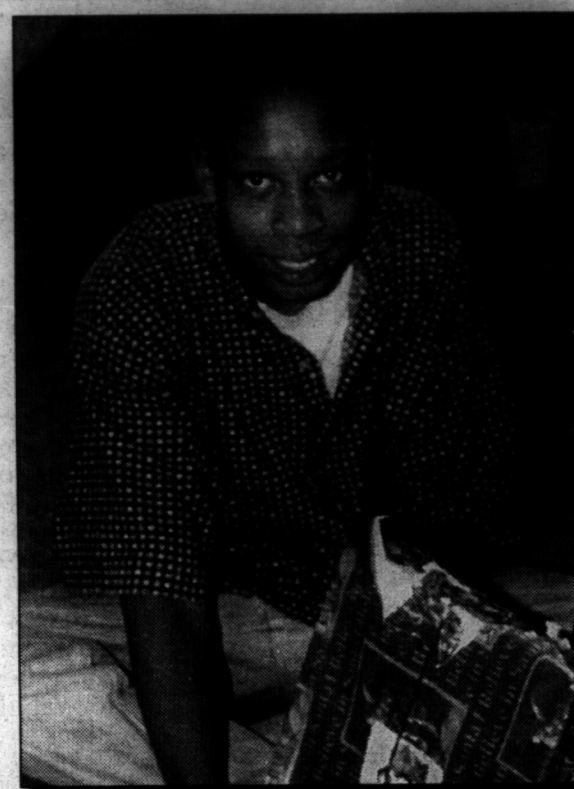
Ms. Frances T. Creel

Ruby, Billy, & Monkey Young

Tinsley Baptist Church

Darrell Young

Rev. & Mrs. Harold B. Harris Jr.



Mark (left) enjoys the anticipation of opening a Christmas gift at a party provided by Nations Poplar Creek Church. Other groups providing Christmas parties for BCV children and young people were FBC Brandon, Wheathersby Baptist Church, FBC Pearl, Highland Baptist Church, Greentree Mortgage Company, Jackson District Choir, FBC Ridgeland Youth, Crossroads Baptist Church, Park Place Baptist Church, Griffith Memorial Baptist Church, and Hillcrest Academy.



Mississippi Baptist Medical Center students (above and below) take a break from studies to spread some Christmas cheer to Village children.



Stacy Davidson (above), FBC Jackson, RA teacher introduces Santa who shared about the unseen gift available to each of us — the greatest gift of all, Jesus Christ.



Santa has a final word with his elf before passing out gifts at the annual Christmas party sponsored by the Harley Davidson shop. Santa even brought a little of his North Pole snow with him to Mississippi to make the party a genuine white Christmas event. A.B.A.T.E. members, Harley Owners Group, Christian Motorcycle Association members and other individuals all helped to make this year's party a success.

The Road to Everlasting Life



God intends for all his children to live with him forever, but the road to everlasting life is blocked. To find that road you must:

Admit that you are a sinner.
There is none righteous, not even one. (Rom. 3:10)

Accept God's love for you.
God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:8)

Acknowledge Christ as Lord.
If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved. (Rom. 10:9)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Mississippi Baptist Church for spiritual guidance.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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PRO QMH XRJDQWCDI
IMWAA BHGWOQ, WDB
QMH MCAAI UH
OHXRKHB; UJO XN
YCDBDHII IMWAA DRQ
BHGWOQ PORX QMHH,
DHCQMHO IMWAA QMA
ZRKHDWDQ RP XN
GHWZH UH OHXRKHB,
IWCQM QMH AROB
QMWW MWQM XHOZN
RD QMHH.

CIWCWM PCPQN-PRJO:

QHD

Clue: X=M

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Romans Ten:Four.

Virginia leader questions SBC partnership

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) — The relationship between the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV) and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) is not a true "partnership" and needs to be re-examined, the new BGAV president told a gathering of Virginia Baptist leaders Dec. 3.

William Wilson, in his first address to the Virginia Baptist Mission Board since his election in Roanoke in November, said the SBC holds "a strange definition of partnership" because it accepts money from BGAV churches while giving only token representation on national denominational committees to the state group.

Wilson, pastor of First Church of Waynesboro, Va., cited statistics showing BGAV churches gave more than \$11 million to SBC causes in 1997, while 75% of trustees of SBC agencies from Virginia came from churches related to the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia (SBCV), a new convention that split off from the BGAV last year.

"I'm not the smartest person in the world, but I get the idea, 'We want your money but we don't want you,' Wilson said

about the Southern Baptist Convention. "We in effect are funding things [while] we have absolutely no say in how money is spent, and personally I'm responsible for being a better steward than that."

Wilson, who has served on the Coordinating Council of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, added he would ask next year's BGAV budget committee to consider the meaning of partnership as it prepares the 1999 budget. He said he will ask the group to bring a budget at next year's annual BGAV meeting that is "simpler and clearer" and which recognizes "those who want to join with us in our mission and will treat us as a full partner in God's family."

Wilson's comments on the BGAV's still-unsettled relationship with the SBC came in a largely positive address in which he characterized the final years of this century as "a wonderful time to be a Baptist, a Virginia Baptist."

Virginia Baptists were forced by years of denominational conflict to rediscover "how we see ourselves and what we value." This process of "self-identification," Wilson said, resulted in

new commitments to autonomy, mission, and partnership.

"The future lies in helping local churches be God's people in their place," said Wilson, but he called the challenges in Virginia greater than churches can handle alone. "We're looking for partners ... people that can help us." Such future partnerships, cautioned Wilson, should "perform ministry consistent with the vision and values of the BGAV" in addition to accepting BGAV money.

The SBC, Wilson continued, has not wanted a true partnership. Instead, they have used the Cooperative Program unified budget "as an instrument of coercion," he said.

According to statistics prepared for Wilson by the BGAV treasurer's office and confirmed by the Religious Herald, newsjournal of the BGAV, 24 trustees from Virginia serve on SBC trustee boards including the Executive Committee, International Mission Board, North American Mission Board, Sunday School Board, Annuity Board, Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, Committee on Boards and Committees, and six seminaries.

Half, or 12, are in churches uniquely aligned with SBCV. Three are in dually aligned churches. Two are in churches whose giving plans give only minimal financial support to BGAV ministries.

Of the remaining seven trustees in Virginia, five belong to churches which support both the BGAV and SBC through a giving track that divides funds between the two.

Two others belong to churches which support other BGAV giving options which do not include funding for the SBC.

During the past year BGAV churches gave more than \$4.3 million to the Cooperative Program, \$3.9 million to Lottie Moon offering for international missions, \$1.8 million to the Annie Armstrong offering for home missions and about \$400,000 to world hunger relief through the International and North American Mission boards.

However, the flow of money is not one way. Last year, for example, SBC entities returned about \$400,000 to Virginia to share costs of missionaries, retirement benefits for pastors and some members of the BGAV staff.

New Va. conservative convention hires four staffers

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) — Virginia's year-old conservative Baptist convention has added four people to its staff to coordinate ministries around the state.

The executive board of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia (SBCV) unanimously elected the four men Nov. 23, said SBCV President Terry Harper, pastor of Colonial Heights (Va.) Church.

They will join SBCV Executive Director Doyle Chauncey as full-time employees on Jan. 1.

The SBCV separated from the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV) in 1996, charging the older BGAV is theologically liberal and is loosening ties to the national Southern Baptist Convention.

Since then 113 congregations have affiliated "uniquely" with the SBCV and another 49 maintain dual ties with both the SBCV and the BGAV. About 1,460 congregations now affiliate with the BGAV.

Joining the SBCV staff are:

- Mark Baldwin, church-growth consultant.
- Kenneth Gooch, missions catalyst.
- Ken Nienke, church-growth consultant.
- Mark Reon, evangelism assistant and coordinator of ministry to students on Virginia's college and university campuses.

In addition to their specialized responsibilities, all four staff members will be involved in starting new churches and

encouraging growth in existing churches, said Harper. The SBCV has set a goal of starting 100 new churches in the next two years, he said.

Harper acknowledged some confusion could result from the SBCV's ministry on college campuses, an area in which the BGAV has been at work for many years.

To minimize the confusion, he said, the SBCV will avoid the term "Baptist Student

Union," a name long used by Southern Baptists engaged in campus ministry.

Already, the SBCV has a presence on three campuses in the state — Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Longwood College in Farmville and Virginia State University in Petersburg — and is developing a fourth at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, said Harper.

The student ministries group of the Virginia Baptist

Mission Board — the BGAV's executive body — maintains work on 44 Virginia campuses.

In other business at a Nov. 23 board meeting, Chauncey reported on the recent move of the SBCV's main offices from Virginia Beach to Richmond, where temporary offices are being leased in the city's western suburbs.

A strategy committee is studying whether to obtain permanent facilities.

Byram RAs/GAs support state missions



The Royal Ambassadors (RAs) and Girls in Action (GAs) of First Church, Byram, recently collected a total of \$422.18 for the Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions in Mississippi. The GAs challenged the RAs to a pizza serving contest, but no victor was announced because the real winner was state missions work in Mississippi. (BR special photo)